

No change in depression seen in children across the globe from 2004 to 2019

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Depression in children younger than 13 years old is uncommon and did

not increase substantially between 2004 and 2019, according to a review published online Aug. 28 in *JAMA Pediatrics*.

Michael J. Spoelma, from the University of New South Wales in Australia, and colleagues conducted a [systematic review](#) and meta-analysis of 41 studies from 2004 to 2019 that provided prevalence estimates for depressive disorders (i.e., [major depressive disorder](#) [MDD], dysthymia, and disruptive mood dysregulation disorder [DMDD]) in children younger than 13 years old.

Based on 41 studies in [children](#) across the world, the researchers found pooled prevalence estimates were 1.07 percent for depressive disorders overall, 0.71 percent for MDD, 0.30 percent for dysthymia, and 1.60 percent for DMDD. There were no significant differences based on [birth cohort](#), between males and females, or between high- and low-income countries. The risk for bias was low overall, except for DMDD, which was hampered by a lack of studies.

"These findings suggest that depression in childhood between 2004 and 2019 was uncommon and did not increase over time, but the lack of data beyond the COVID-19 pandemic is yet to be accounted for," the authors write.

More information: Michael J. Spoelma et al, Estimated Prevalence of Depressive Disorders in Children From 2004 to 2019, *JAMA Pediatrics* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamapediatrics.2023.3221](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2023.3221)

Sheri Madigan et al, Is It Time to Reconsider the Diagnostic Construct Validity of Depressive Disorders for Young Children?, *JAMA Pediatrics* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamapediatrics.2023.3130](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2023.3130)

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